

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA

Civil Misc. No. 3046

FILED
JAN 03 2000
CLERK
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DIST. OF ALA.

O R D E R

**PHOTOGRAPHY, BROADCASTING, RECORDING
AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES¹**

The taking of photographs and operation of audio or video recording in the courtroom or its environs, and radio or television broadcasting from the courtroom during the progress or in connection with judicial proceedings, including proceedings before a United States Magistrate, Bankruptcy Judge or Administrative Law Judge, whether or not court is in session, is prohibited. The courtroom and its environs, as such terms are used in this order, shall include any portion of the United States courthouse building and the exterior steps to such buildings, and parking areas adjacent to such buildings if such areas are owned by the United States Government. Where the interests of justice or public safety may so require, the Court may direct the marshal to extend the environs of the courtroom, as such term is contemplated in this order, to the curb or edge of the public streets or thoroughfares adjacent to such buildings if such areas are owned by the United States Government. In exceptional situations, at the request of the United States Marshal or United States Attorney, the court may direct limitations on photography and broadcasting to maintain the secrecy of grand jury proceedings, to protect jurors and witnesses, and to further the interest of justice in

¹ This order supersedes the court's order filed October 24, 1997 relating to photography, broadcasting and recording, which is hereby VACATED.

unusual, hazardous, or inflammatory circumstances. However, attorneys and members of their staffs may possess and use electronic or photographic means for the presentation of evidence. The broadcasting, televising, recording, or photographing of investitive, ceremonial, or naturalization proceedings may be authorized by the presiding judge.

In addition, cellular telephones, paging devices, and laptop computers may be possessed in the courtroom and its environs by members of the Court family, attorneys, their staff, and the press. The laptop computers may be used in the courtroom; but the cellular telephones must be turned off in the courtroom and the paging devices must be in the silent vibrator mode or turned off. The cellular telephones may be used outside the courtroom and within its environs. However, if any cellular telephone or paging device goes off in the courtroom, it will be subject to confiscation and other sanctions will be considered. Users will be required to demonstrate to the Court Security Officers that the devices perform their proper functions.

It is the purpose of this order to preserve and protect the dignity and solemnity of court proceedings, to promote public safety, as well as the safety of the court and its personnel, and to facilitate access to court functions by the public and court officers while allowing the progressive use of electronic devices which will aid in the preparation and trial of cases and the hearing and resolution of motions and other court matters. Nothing herein contained shall be construed unreasonably so as to restrict the constitutional rights of any individual. The environs of the courtroom as defined in this order shall not include the office of any elected official within any United States courthouse, nor should it include the office area of any other agency within such buildings where photography, broadcasting, and

recording have been invited or authorized by the person in charge thereof with respect to a matter which is unrelated to court proceedings or security.

This order shall remain in effect until further order of the court.

DONE this the 3rd day of January, 2000.

/s/ W. Harold Albritton
CHIEF JUDGE

/s/ Myron H. Thompson
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

/s/ Ira De Ment
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE